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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 11, 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BROCKLEY SMITH
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Letter to the President from
Luis Fernandez Roca, Secretary
General, Cuban Student Directorate,
concerning the Cuban situation

Referring to your recent undated memorandum and
your further oral instructions and my memorandum
to you of December 28, I am enclosing a copy of the
Department's reply to Mr. Fernandez. Also enclosed
is Mr. Fernandez' letter for your files.


William H. Brubeck
Executive Secretary

Enclosures:

1. Reply to Mr. Fernandez.
2. Letter from Mr. Fernandez.

Dear Mr. Fernandez:

I have for reply your letter of December 13, 1962 addressed to the President, on the subject of the present Communist regime in Cuba. We appreciate your making your views known to us so eloquently and forcefully.

The President made evident the position of the United States with regard to freedom for the Cuban people in his speech on December 29 to the Cuban Invasion Brigade. I enclose for your convenience a copy of his remarks.

Please accept my best wishes for the new year.

Sincerely yours,

C. H. Barn
Officer in Charge
Cuban Affairs

Enclosure:

Remarks of the President on
December 29, 1962.

Mr. Luis Fernandez Rocha,
Secretary General, Cuban Student Directorate,
Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil,
P. O. Box 105,
Miami 1, Florida.

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Washington, December 13, 1960

Honorable John F. Kennedy
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President:

In your historic speech of October 22nd, you addressed all Cubans with the warm phrase, "I speak to you as a friend." We students of Cuba, heartened by your expression of friendship, respectfully wish to make our thoughts known to you.

We address ourselves to you, Mr. President, because we understand and recognize that the United States is the leading nation of a threatened West - the strong arm of Christian civilization, on a war footing against the materialistic and atheist Communist ideology - and because we are certain that this great nation cannot remain impassive in the face of an extremely dangerous situation, with possible consequences that may surpass the sad fate of Eastern Europe and a great part of Asia.

The perilous international crisis brought about by the presence of a foreign base in the American Continent, and the installation of offensive arms only 90 miles from the United States, has now entered a phase of negotiations which portends consequences that are outside the realm of the knowledge of Cubans.

Permit us to make it known to you that we are seriously concerned with the fate of all hemispheric nations, and, in particular, with the ultimate destiny of the Cuban people, if such negotiations were to lead to any recognition of a status that would ensure the permanence of a Marxist-Leninist regime, firmly planted in the very heart of the Americas. Such an agreement would be tantamount to admitting Soviet colonialism in our hemisphere.

We would not be sincere in what we write, if we did not recognize our responsibilities in the tragedy of our country. The advent of Communism in Cuba, regarded in the light of history, is not a spontaneous affair.

Unfortunately - an exiled people does not necessarily appreciate the lessons which come as a consequence of bitter experience - many calamities, which are directly attributable to our present plight, persist

among our compatriots in exile. These same factors and forces, once having assumed the leadership in our struggle, have not fully accepted their responsibilities. Our uncertainties demand that we ward them off, for in them, we perceive the seeds of future disasters. We do not blush at admitting that the endemic vices of Cubans demand emergency therapy; and Cuban youth is willing to assume this responsibility.

Nevertheless, an objective analysis of the situation must necessarily take into account the co-responsibility of the West, led by the United States of America. All of us permitted Communist barbarism to advance with impunity, and invade our hemisphere disguised as an apocalyptic hero. For, when a handful of courageous men faced Stalin tanks on the sands of Giron Beach, on that 17th of April, repeating the story written in blood five years before on the streets of Budapest; and when hundreds of Cuban students, led by Alberto Muller fought the Red tyranny in the Sierras of Oriente, the nations of the Free World limited their aid to reticent moral support. And, as in Hungary, Communist arms smashed the efforts of the liberators, taking full advantage of the indecision of the Free West.

Our concern was increased on October 22nd, when the energetic reply to the arrogant Soviet buildup in Cuba, was couched in terms of material danger; and not on a plane of ideological incompatibility. We consider that the presence of offensive arms in Cuba was simply the result of the permanence of a Communist regime in the island, permitted to grow and prosper in control and terror by the totally unjustified delays of international diplomacy; and by the unwillingness of free nations to help liberty-loving Cubans.

The real Cuban crisis did not begin with the introduction of offensive arms in Cuba; it was born on the day that tacit permission was granted for the establishment of a Communist regime in our hemisphere. The political strategists of Soviet foreign policy worked with high hopes of perpetuating a Marxist regime in Cuba, after transforming it into a dagger pointed straight at the heart of this country. They assumed that American authorities would readily accede to ignoring the destiny of more than six million human beings, in order to avoid the horrors of nuclear war.

But we believe that the patience of the Free World has its limits; and that dignity, for the West - in opposition to the view of the Communist bloc - is above subordinate desires. Indeed, you yourself expressed it so admirably on October 22nd, when you stated, "The cost of freedom is always high - but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose is the path of surrender or submission. Our goal is not the victory of might - not peace at the expense of freedom; but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and we hope, around the world."

A great American people also expressed the same sentiments through their legislators last September 26th, when a joint resolution was

passed in Congress, in which the third paragraph affirms that the United States will cooperate with the Organization of American States, and all peace-loving Cubans, for the self-determination of the Cuban people. The same right was guaranteed to the peoples of the hemisphere by the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, of 1947; and it was again ratified at Punta del Este, when the present Cuban regime was declared incompatible with the inter-American system.

All the above has led us to believe that the negotiations being held at present between the Soviet Union and the United States of America will lead definitively to the elimination of the Communist regime in Havana, the direct cause of the eruptive state of hemispheric politics, and of the dangerous exposure suffered by the world to an atomic confrontation.

Only thus will it be possible to arrive at a permanent conclusion and the long wished-for "peace in the Caribbean" will become a reality. The tranquility of the Americas, imperative for the advance of social progress through the Alliance for Progress, will become feasible only when the Cuban Communist regime is totally eradicated. Democracy and liberty in the hemisphere depend totally on its overthrow.

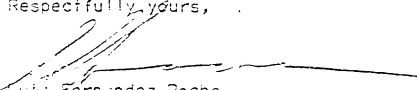
Should the end of the crisis tend to prolong the agony of our people, Cubans will never renounce the right to fight, by every means possible, those who have seized our national sovereignty; and in identical fashion, we have never renounced the right to carry the struggle to the enemy at every single opportunity.

Cuban youth, therefore, is able, ready and willing to assume its responsibility in this battle; and will call to the ranks of dignity all men who, throughout history, have held high the best traditions of our people. We aspire to the rescue of our national sovereignty, on a high plane of strong alliance with the free countries of the Americas; and we stake claim to the necessary and effective backing, so sorely needed to culminate in a rapid victory for our just cause.

Mr. President, our people will not be dismayed by sacrifices, if these lead to victory. As you stated on October 22nd, we yearn for the day when we shall be truly free; free from foreign dominance; free to elect our own government; free to choose our own system; free to own our own land; free to speak and write and profess our beliefs without terror and degradation.

With the testimony of our highest consideration, we remain,

Respectfully yours,



Luis Fernandez Rocha
Secretary General
CUBAN STUDENT DIRECTORATE